

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. An identification system for identifying characteristics of a respective ink for a printing system, comprising:
 - 5 a tag including
 - a memory with logic which stores data related to the characteristics of the ink; and
 - a source which generates a data signal relating to a characteristic of the ink; and
 - 10 a reader which receives the data signal.
2. The identification system of claim 1, wherein the reader comprises a reader/writer which receives the data signal from the tag and transmits incoming data signals to the tag.
3. The system of claim 1, wherein the logic instructs the source to generate the output data taken from the memory as an outgoing RF signal.
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4. The system of claim 1 wherein the data identifies the color of the ink.
5. The system of claim 1 wherein the data identifies the age of the ink.
6. The system of claim 1 further comprising a controller coupled to the reader.
7. The system of claim 6 further comprising a disabler circuit coupled to the controller, the disabler circuit disabling the printing system when the data signal received from the tag does not satisfy a pre-determined criteria.
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8. The system of claim 7 wherein the disabler circuit disables the printing system when the data signal indicates that the ink is the incorrect color or the ink has exceeded its expiration date.
9. The system of claim 1 wherein the tag is attached to a container holding the ink.
- 5 10. The system of claim 1 wherein the data signal from the tag is transmitted to the reader wirelessly.
11. A radio frequency (RF) identification tag for identifying characteristics of an ink, comprising:
 - a memory which stores data; and
 - 10 an RF source which generates RF signals, selective data being transmitted as the RF signals, and identifying at least one characteristic of the ink
12. The radio frequency identification tag of claim 11, wherein the at least one characteristic comprises the color of the ink
- 15 13. The radio frequency identification tag of claim 11, wherein the at least one characteristic comprises the age of the ink.
14. A radio frequency (RF) identification system for identifying characteristics of an ink, comprising:
 - an RF identification tag including a memory which stores data, an RF
 - 20 source which generates RF signals, selective data associated with the ink being transmitted as the RF signals; and
 - a reader which receives the transmitted RF signals from the RF identification tag.

15. The system of claim 14, wherein the selective data is the color of the ink.
16. The system of claim 14, wherein the selective data is the age of the ink.
17. The system of claim 14, wherein the RF identification tag is attached to a container holding the ink.
- 5 18. The system of claim 17, wherein the reader is positioned on or within the printer system to receive the transmitted RF signals when the container is placed in the printer.
19. The system of claim 14, further comprising an disabler circuit coupled to the reader, the reader instructing the disabler circuit to disable the printer when the
10 selective data does not meet a predetermined criteria.
20. The system of claim 19, wherein the reader instructs the disabler circuit to disable the printer when the selective data is associated with an ink of an incorrect color, or when the ink has exceeded its expiration date.
21. The system of claim 19, further comprising a control unit, the control unit
15 including the disabler circuit.
22. A radio frequency (RF) identification tag for identifying characteristics of an ink, comprising:
 - a memory which stores data;
 - a RF source which generates RF signals; and
 - 20 a logic which inputs the data into the memory, and instructs the memory to output selective data, the selective data being transmitted as the RF signals, the selective data identifying the color of the ink and the age of the ink.

23. A method of identifying characteristics of an ink in a printing system,
comprising:
transmitting selective data from a tag; and
5 reading the selective data with a reader, the selective data identifying a
characteristic of the ink.
24. The method of claim 23, wherein the characteristic relates to at least one of the
color of the ink and the age of the ink.
25. The method of claim 23, wherein the data from the tag is transmitted to the
10 reader wirelessly.
26. The method of claim 25, wherein the data from the tag is transmitted via a radio
frequency (RF) signal.
27. The method of claim 23 further comprising disabling the printing system when
the selective data does not satisfy a predetermined criteria.
- 15 28. The method of claim 28, wherein the predetermined criteria relates to at least
one of the color of the ink and the age of the ink.